

Exchange report

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Lisbon, Portugal

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I spent my exchange semester in Lisbon, Portugal. I chose Portugal as my destination, because I had never been there before and I had heard so many amazing things about it. No need to say, that now I can agree that Portugal really is as beautiful as everyone says. My semester started in September 2019 and went on until January 2020. It was my third semester at KEA, where I study Multimedia Design and Communication.

The classes I chose were **Illustration, Communication Design, Web Programming, Multimedia Design, Film and Documental image, Art and Image Philosophy** and **Portuguese** language course.

### Final result



In **Illustration** classes we were always painting, we had different exercises, for example, to illustrate a poem, do a painted poster for circus band or make posters about global issues. It was almost forbidden to use computer during those classes.

I think this was one of the most valuable courses I had in Portugal, because everything in the design world starts with a sketch - in this course I got to improve my sketching on real paper.

In **Communication Design** we talked a lot about typography, layout and visual identity. First task was to create a logo and colour scheme for a publishing company. We had to do a proper guide, including colour combinations, margins, sizing etc. Afterwards, using the logo and regulations we made, we designed a book collection of four books. Four differently sized book covers + a box for the collection. In this exercise we got to test if our set regulations, for example, for spine size logo works.

The last assignment was a little bit different - it was to create a booklet about six different times in design. We had to choose one artist and its work and write a short description + design a 16 page booklet, with a separate cover. In the end we printed it. It was good training for designing something in CMYK and checking if all the margins / font sizes and everything else looks good in the printed version.



## CONCEPT

The concept of logo exists out of four main aspects. The first one is the letters L, V and L from the name of the publishing company Lá vai Lisboa. The second aspect is the book you can see in the middle of the logo. The book might be the most important aspect. It visualises the main product and purpose of the company. Lá vai Lisboa is a publishing agency that works with book publishing. The third aspect are the bottom parts of the L's which form a moustache. The inspiration for this came from realism. The kind of moustache became a symbol of the time - most painters had big moustaches and also in the paintings of realism it is common to see men portrayed with big and expressive moustache. The fourth aspect is inspired from Lisbon, where the publishing company locates itself, and the translation of "Lá vai Lisboa" which in English means "There goes Lisbon". Therefore, some of the details in logo are the well known symbol of Lisbon - Ponte 25 de Abril and the hills, as Lisbon is known also as the city of hills.

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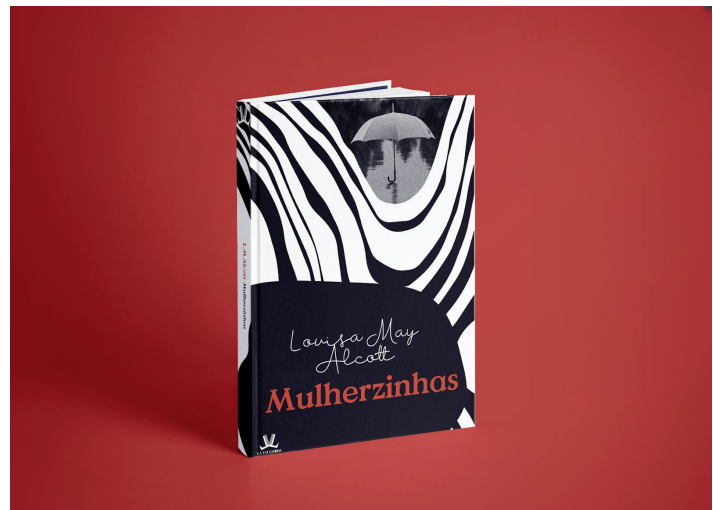
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20 mm



25 mm

**Multimedia Design** was all about video. We worked a lot with Adobe AfterEffects, that was a new tool for me. We had a few fun tasks, for example to recreate titles for an existing movie or to make a book trailer in video format. Multimedia Design was my favourite course of all, I learned so much new from it.

Exercise one : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOmQKOEfcOc>

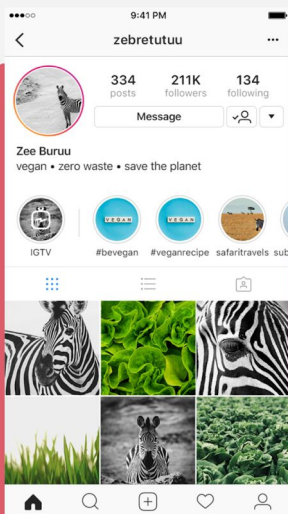
Exercise two : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5fZttAw-qk>

If I would be able to choose courses again, I would not take **Web Programming**. It overlapped with my knowledge from before ( what we had already studied in KEA ) and I learned absolutely nothing new. The tasks were weird as well - we had to hijack a website, or create a prototype, that is based on a real website, but adjust it as if it would be a website for a specific animal instead.

For this assignment I chose the platform Instagram. My chosen animal is zebra.

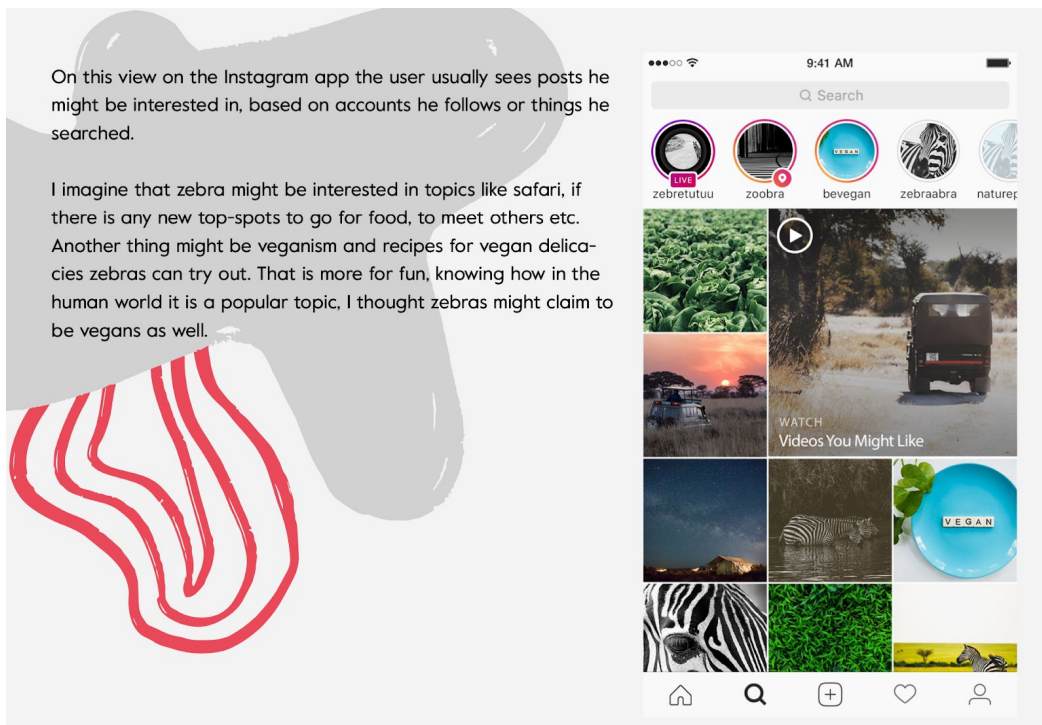
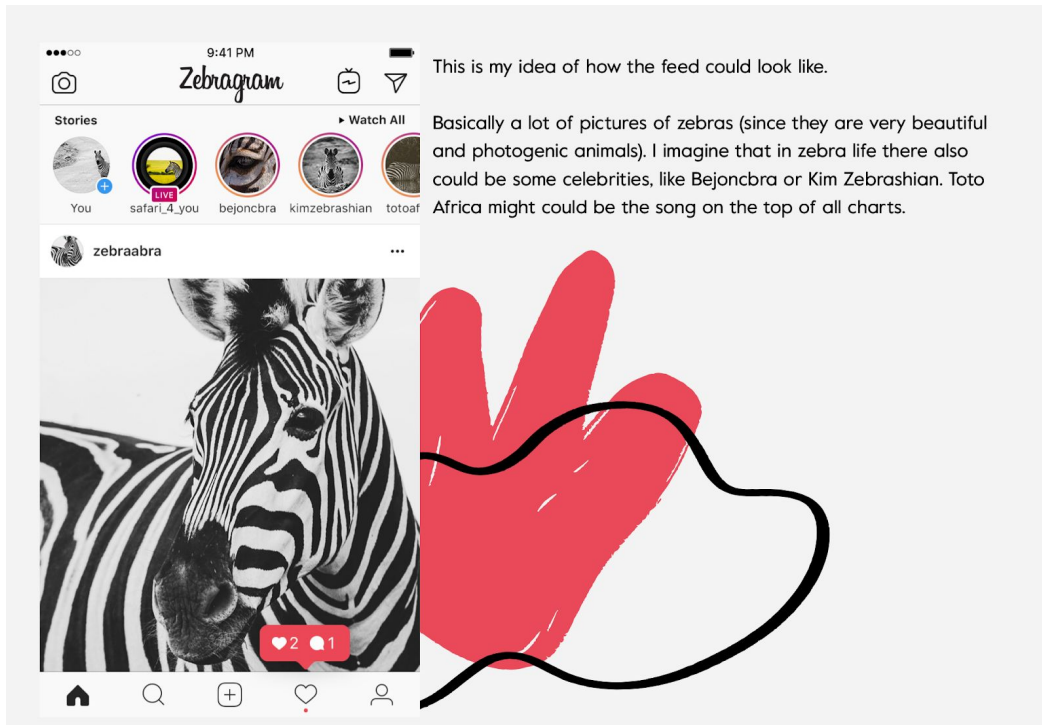
I recalled Instagram to Zebragram - as the content and users are zebras and zebras only.

~~Instagram~~  
Zebragram



Imagining that zebra is the user, I created an account for Zee Buru ( @zebretutuu ) with the possible content that zebra could be posting - photos of itself and food it is eating, since I stated that Zee Buru is a vegan (obviously, since the animal mostly eats grass and greens), zero waste activist and aware of the global problems.

At first I wanted to make everything in black&white (since zebra pattern is black and white) but then I read that they in fact see colors, so that would not make any sense.



In **Film and Documental image** we watched a lot of documentaries. Together with the teacher we also attended Documental film festival in Lisbon. It was a fun course, during which we also created our own documentary. We had to choose one public place, observe it, find an interesting angle of it and afterwards find a related person to this and do an interview. My group chose a cabaret in Lisbon and afterwards we did an interview with one of the artists. For a foreign student, this exercise was a good way to explore Portuguese culture as well.

Final assignment : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynjTi7\\_sme0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynjTi7_sme0)

In **Art and Image Philosophy** course, during class we talked a lot. We had to prepare and read some materials that teacher had given us and afterwards we discussed that. We analysed different approaches of visual culture. The main assignment for this course was an analytic essay about either TV show, movie, photography etc.

**Portuguese** language course explains itself by the name. This was an optional course, for whom I did not get any ECTS ( because of an overlap with other of my courses ). We talked a lot about the culture and learned some basics to survive. It was very useful, knowing that the majority of Portuguese people do not speak very well English.

## **Academic Experience**

- **How helpful was the receiving school in the process of choosing classes and settling you in?**

Coordinators in IADE were very helpful, always answered emails quickly and helped the best they could.

- **What classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?**

My favourite classes were Multimedia Design, Communication Design and Illustration. I find those valuable because in Copenhagen we did not do anything similar to the tasks I had in these courses. Here we were aloud to express ourselves creatively and besides that I gained experience with new tools I was not familiar with before.

- **What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?**

The only course I really regret taking is Web Programming. It was a course from the first year of IADE, so everything we did, I already knew from before. Unfortunately I did not learn anything new during this class.

- **What classes would you advise other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or not to choose?**

As I mentioned before - I recommend Multimedia Design, Communication Design and Illustration. But Web Programming - unless the student has absolutely no clue how to code, the course is not valuable.

## **Cultural/Personal Experience**

- **What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?**

Portuguese people are very welcoming, so the only real difficulty was the language. But I am not talking about school in this case, in IADE everyone communicated in English and language barrier did not affect my studies.

- **How helpful was the receiving school in this process?**

International office in IADE was always helpful, no matter what the question was.

- **What was the best cultural/personal experience during your studies abroad?**

I think for me the best experience was celebrating Christmas in Portugal, with a Portuguese family. To see their traditions, what they have for dinner on Christmas and to be in the countryside, to see the real side of Portugal.

- **What advice would you give other KEA students going to study abroad at the receiving school?**

Be social and outgoing! Talk and meet with the local students, not only Erasmus ones. Explore all the possibilities that the receiving school has to offer ( any labs, studios, workshops etc ) and use them.

- **How was the application process?**

The application process was very long.

- **What did KEA help you with?**

I had quite a lot of questions regarding the documentation and my coordinator helped me a lot.



- **What help did you receive from your school abroad?**

They answered my private emails to them with different study related questions.

- **Did you have any practical difficulties settling down in at your destination?**

Not really. Finding a place to live was much more easier than in Copenhagen.

- **Where did you live?**

I lived in a small apartment together with my classmate from Copenhagen, who also went to exchange in Lisbon.

- **Was it difficult to find accommodation?**

No.

- **Was it expensive?**

Well, it was more expensive than in my home country, but much cheaper than in Copenhagen.

- **What kind of expenses did you have in general?**

Groceries / dining, drinking out / transportation.

- **Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?**

Yes.

## **Social and Cultural Experiences**

- **A description of your social and cultural experiences.**

Lisbon is a very colorful place. It is a big city, where something is always happening, tourists are always somewhere inbetween the streets but it is the locals and the small places the locals own, that charmed me very much. Even though I spent five months there, I still feel that I left so many places behind, that I did not have enough time to explore. I know my way around the city, but till the end I felt like a tourist anyway.

I come from Latvia. So during my studies I have explored two different countries and cultures - Denmark and Portugal. In Denmark I felt that people are (and, yes, I do think this stereotype is true) cold and hard to make friends with. Portuguese people however are super welcoming and open to everyone. I already felt so in Lisbon, but when I visited Porto, it was even more obvious.

- **What to do in the city.**

When I had nothing to do, I was just walking around and exploring the streets. I could always find a way that I had not walked before.

- **How to find friends and how to network.**

In school, the other Erasmus students and local students. I would say that when being an Erasmus student, you have to say yes a lot and go out with others a lot.

## **Practical Experiences**

- **How did you travel to the country and city of study, where did you stay, where did you eat, what did it cost, etc.**

I walked a lot, 4km to school and back everyday. I don't know why, but I used public transportation very rarely. Sometimes I took a taxi as well. And when traveling to other cities - with either train/bus or rented car.

Since Portugal is relatively cheap, we were dining out every now and then, exploring different cuisines and restaurants. But mostly I cooked and ate at home.

I have a Portuguese friend, whose cousin owns an AirBnb in Lisbon - that's where I stayed during my exchange. It was located close to the city center of Lisbon, easy to get everywhere. We also got a good discount for the apartment.

## **Conclusion**

- **To what extent were your expectations met, both professionally and culturally?**

Culturally my expectations really were too low - Portugal is an amazing place to live in and I would definitely love to go back and live there for some more time. The weather, colours and people are few of the nice things I will remember Portugal by.

Professionally I was surprised by the high level of education I got. I feel like I learned a lot more than I did in Copenhagen. In Copenhagen I got a lot of the theoretical part, while in Lisbon I got to try my skills in practice - for example, to prepare a file for printing, with all the measurements, CMYK colours etc - it was quite challenging.

To everyone who is in doubt, where to go in Erasmus - I recommend Portugal! And there is no reason to be afraid of the fact that Portuguese does not speak English - I had no problem with that at school. Even lessons that were thought in Portuguese, the teachers always translated and explained everything in English to us, exchange students!